

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested. Claims 1-40 are pending. Claim 31 is amended and Claim 41 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by way of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 31 was objected to and Claim 41 was rejected as unpatentable over Peterson et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 20040014250, hereinafter "Peterson") in view of Meeks et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,392,749, hereinafter "Meeks"). Claims 1-40 were allowed.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of Claims 1-40.

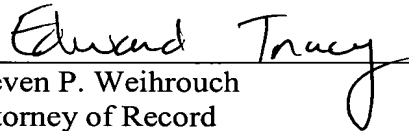
With regard to the objection to Claim 31, Claim 31 is amended to depend from Claim 26, which defines an "exposing" step. Accordingly, Claim 31 is believed to be in compliance with 37 C.F.R. §1.75(a).

With regard to the rejection of Claim 41 as unpatentable over Peterson in view of Meeks, Claim 41 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, making that rejection moot.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 1-40 patentably distinguishes over the cited art. The present application is therefore believed to be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Steven P. Weihrouch", is written over a horizontal line.

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